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# D R A M A

NOVEMBER MCMXXIV

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

## AN ANNOUNCEMENT

By Geoffrey Whitworth

TOO late, unfortunately, for announcement at the Liverpool Conference of the Drama League, there has come to hand a piece of news which I believe will be as gratifying to the members of the League as it has already proved to the Council.

Some who read these words may recollect those days, more than five years ago now, when I was holding out a rosy picture of the benefits which the League was to confer on its members: libraries, reading-rooms, information bureaux, and the like. A somewhat too rosy picture, perhaps. But I really meant it, because there was hope of all these things. And it did not seem altogether my fault when hope was deferred, and one had to fall back on faith, or else give up altogether. Some did so give up, and resigned from the League. Others displayed a really British tenacity. They were content with faith, and paid unmurmuring their annual subscription. And the curious thing was that the number of these faithful ones grew and grew, and the time came when, if not precisely in the way we had at first intended, it became evident that on rather more modest, though still ambitious lines, the League was gaining a certain reputation for good and disinterested work done.

At Liverpool, a few days ago, Mr. Granville-Barker was able to report that our membership had almost touched the first one thousand. Once more it appeared that we might begin to hope not unreasonably for some at least of those benefits which, in our first enthusiasm, we had proposed not as the goal but as the very starting point of

our enterprise. And then hardly was the Conference over, when it was intimated to us that these hopes were already within the bounds of realization. The goal was in sight.

In simple words, the Committee of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust had favourably considered a suggestion recently put before them, and had decided to give to the League now and annually for the next three years, a grant which should enable us to establish in London a dramatic Library and Reference Room, and thus lay the foundation of a permanent centre for the spread and study of dramatic literature.

The grant, it should be noted, is made for three years only. It is in no sense an endowment. It is a challenge rather to the Drama League to set about its own expansion so that when the time comes it may find itself supported by a membership equivalent to a yearly income of some two thousand pounds, that roughly being the income which will be needed to finance the League on its new basis.

The Council of the League will at once address itself to the task of deciding how best the Carnegie grant can be utilized. In the first place larger premises must be found, and a library system inaugurated which shall render the utmost service to our members both in London and the Provinces. Of these arrangements further and fuller announcements will be made in due course. Meanwhile we are content to echo King Henry's exhortation:—

Let there be sung, *Non nobis and Te Deum*.  
For this may well be our *Agincourt*.

# THEATRICAL REALIZATION

Being part of a Lecture by Jacques Copeau

**T**HIS problem of what I have called theatrical realization is, as it seems to me, the problem of the stage in the first place, and of the actors who live upon the stage.

I have already mentioned the position which I would accord to the architect, and the importance I attach to the physical structure of the stage as affecting the conception of the drama. I shall not dwell further on this subject since it would lead us too far, demanding as it does a lecture all to itself, and likely to lead me, besides, to conclusions which, owing to lack of time, of money, and of the proper material conditions, I have not myself been able to put into practice at the Vieux Colombier.

On the subject of the actor, what I have to say is very simple in theory, but in practice very difficult. I am not of those who think that the actor ought necessarily to be an uncultivated and stupid person. I believe that an actor is born, not made. But at the same time I believe that in the majority of cases the actor's natural gift can best be developed by culture and by education. Thus I have striven by all the means in my power, and in particular by a constant endeavour to elevate him to a position of some dignity, to give the actor a high ideal of his function, to enlarge and enrich his consciousness, to protect him from that excessive specialisation which tends to make a machine of him, to instruct him by advice, by precept and by example, and finally to endow him with a supple yet sure technique which so far from suppressing his personality shall tend to give it free play. I cannot boast that I have transformed the natures of my actors, but I have disciplined them. I have been the master of my troop. And thanks to the confidence that has existed between us, thanks to the feeling of equality before difficulties which we have in common to overcome, thanks to the irresistible fascination of work ceaselessly undertaken together and ceaselessly perfected, and to that spirit of justice which has given to each in turn the opportunity to show what he can do, thanks to all this, the work has been easy, full of joy, and almost always crowned with success. Nothing is more debasing than the task of a player when it is undertaken without love

and without dignity. Nothing more moving than that sacrifice of himself which the actor offers every day to the thought of the poet who is the true priest of the theatre.

There is another condition of theatre work of the finest quality which is often mentioned and everywhere recognised as indispensable, a condition, however, which is seldom found. This is the unity of conception which should not only inform the production from the very beginning of its preparation, but which should also be evident in the execution of its every detail. The most common defect in our stage work, and the defect that is most often noticed, is poor organisation and a lack of co-ordination. To achieve that harmony of effect that shall really impress at once the minds and senses of the spectators, there must be one man who, having first penetrated the secret, and, so to say, incorporated in himself the rhythm of the drama, having also assimilated the character of each personage in the play, and the actions and reactions between the various actors, should be capable of circumscribing the outline of the drama, setting bounds to its extent, forming its contents, planning the decoration of the stage, lighting it, arranging its furniture, imagining the physical appearance and costume of the actors, regulating the physical evolutions of the scene, assigning to everything its place, to each individual his particular action, in rediscovering, in fine, in a world of make-believe the natural movement and infinite variety of life. The producer is here the substitute of the dramatic poet. For let us never forget that it is the poet and the poet alone whose influence was originally supreme in all the life of the drama. It was the poet who trained the chorus, determined its movements, decided the arrangement of the stage, and even created the physical appearance of the actors. In the fourth century before Christ Æschylus summed up in himself the whole of the drama. From him everything outflowed as from a fountain head. To him the rhythm of the whole was subservient. But from the very moment when the dramatic poet became separated as it were from the conditions of theatrical representation, lost interest in them and grew con-

tent to specialise in his function of author, from that moment he ceased to grow, fell into decay, and a certain decadence set in. So fugitive is the moment of perfection!

It is the great merit of the artists of the new theatre that they have felt the necessity of a return to this primitive unity which alone permits the voice of the poet to reach the ear of the spectator, pure and undefiled. This unity, as I have said, we seek to recapture in a union, well nigh impossible though it be, between the different workers in the theatre, or better still, as it is expressed in the single person of the producer who, in virtue of his identification with the work which he sets forth on the stage, restores to us an image, albeit a faint one, of the poet himself. For all those problems of theatrical realisation which so worry us, exist only in virtue of our lack of that pure and simple dramatic vitality which is to be found in the person of the man of genius alone. For all the questions which we pose to ourselves can be completely answered only by the poet, be he an *Æschylus*, a *Shakespeare*, or a *Molière*.

The vocation of producer, which resembles a little that of God the Father, the Creator of the universe, exercises nowadays a great fascination over many people. Many young men, and young women even, feel drawn to this profession, and soon there will be more producers than actors. In the new theatre the actor will find himself obliged to renounce his pretensions to the first place. And in this there is demanded of him a renunciation that is nothing if not just. It is right that the actor's personality, if too pretentious, should be cast into the shade. But if this is to be to the advantage of the personality of the producer (which is often no less egotistical, no less clumsily pretentious), I am fearful lest in too many cases undue glorification of the actor may only give place to the glorification of the producer. This is to escape from one evil by falling into another that is worse.

Whatever the talent, the imagination, and the technical science of a producer, he is not worthy of his function unless he practises the greatest, the simplest and the most difficult of virtues. I mean the virtue of sincerity—sincerity that is compounded of

intelligence and modesty. A long chapter might be written on this question of sincerity in theatrical production. First, one would have to define what is meant by sincerity, and show that it is not, as is commonly supposed, a virtue of impulsiveness, of unconstrained and venturesome youth, but, on the contrary, a virtue of maturity, where wisdom does not exclude warmth of feeling but where there is a place for reflection, for restraint, and for the exercise of choice, discretion and discernment. Nothing is easier than to get excited over the text of a play. Nothing more usual than to have "ideas," all sorts of ideas about it—dressing up *Hamlet*, for instance, as a lieutenant in Hussars, or bringing on *Tartuffe* in a bathing costume. Nothing is more terrifying than a producer with ideas. His rôle should be not to have ideas but to understand and to interpret the ideas of the author, not forcing them or distorting them in any particular, but translating them faithfully into the language of the theatre.

And what are the methods best conducive to the proper rendering of an author's text? That is a question I should find it difficult to answer. I fancy it is a thing that can scarcely be learnt or taught. It is a gift, a grace which is accorded to us, an inspiration comparable to that of the poet, of a lower order certainly, but of the same kind. So the born man of the theatre enters with scarce an effort and by a kind of mysterious connivance, into possession of the work of the born dramatist. That which for another is nothing more than a succession of words, black or white, and the dessicated phrases of a stage dialogue, is discoverable by the born producer, as it were at the first glance, for a world of form, sound, colour, movement. And these things he does not invent. He retrieves them. They are the movements, the colours, sounds and forms which accompanied more or less consciously the creative act of the poet. This is why I think that for a work properly conceived for the stage, there exists one inevitable stage representation, and one only, that which is written in the author's text, like the notes on a musician's stave. These notes are dumb to the eyes of the profane. The glance of the musician makes them sing.



THE JOURNAL OF  
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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*Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.*

ELSEWHERE we print a full report of the public meeting held in connexion with the Liverpool Conference, which was the largest yet held by the League. Over a hundred and twenty delegates from affiliated societies took part, and the arrangements made by the Liverpool Playhouse Circle were highly appreciated by everyone. The minutes of the meeting of delegates held on the Saturday morning following the public meeting at the Picton Hall will be printed in the next number of *DRAMA*.

On another page we print an extract from the lecture given by M. Jacques Copeau at the Institut Française, under the auspices of the League. We were very glad to welcome this distinguished pioneer of the French theatre, and those present at the lecture were conscious of the inspiration which has raised the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier to an unique position among the playhouses of Europe. In the course of his

lecture—which we only wish we could have printed in full—M. Copeau paid a generous tribute to the work of Gordon Craig, whose example he is now following by abandoning, for the moment, play production for the establishment of a small school of drama, “somewhere in France.” These excursions into the wilderness are beyond the understanding of many for whom practical work seems the end-all of life. But in art, as in religion, it is well that some should feel, from time to time, the call of abnegation. They keep alive a standard that is not of this world.

As an item of news the fact was widely circulated in various newspapers that the Drama League, through its Liverpool Conference, had turned down a proposal to intervene in the dispute now in progress between the Actors' Association and the Stage Guild. Lest this may seem to imply an indifference on our part to this most grave question, it may be well to state that the Council of the League is in full agreement with that decision—not certainly because of any indifference, but because it is felt that this is a question which, affecting as it does the interests of actors and actors only, is a matter which must be left to them to deal with in their own way. Any other attitude would be in the nature of an impertinence, though none could desire more than we do a termination on satisfactory lines to a dispute which is so enervating to the health of the professional theatre.

The Labour Publishing Company have sent us a copy of their just published “Play Production for Everyone,” by Monica Ewer. We can cordially recommend this little book, which in short compass covers a wide field of information likely to be useful to amateurs whose experience still remains to be bought. There are chapters on Choosing the Play, Production, the Actor, Stage Manager, Property Master, Lighting, Scenery, and so forth, and the author writes from the practical rather than from the theoretical point of view. The price is 2s. 6d., and copies can be obtained through the Drama League. Postage 3d.



# THE LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE

In connection with the Annual Conference of the British Drama League at Liverpool a public meeting was held in the Picton Hall on the evening of October 25th, when interesting addresses were given by Miss Lena Ashwell, Mr. Lennox Robinson and Mr. Granville-Barker. Prof. Reilly, of Liverpool University, occupied the chair and there was an encouragingly large audience.

Prof. Reilly, in his introductory remarks, said the chair should really have been occupied by Col. Shute, to whom they owed so much in connexion with the Repertory Theatre in Liverpool. If Col. Shute was in the audience he would call upon him to speak later. Fate had been very kind to Liverpool in bringing the Drama League to the city. In coming to Liverpool the League honoured whatever efforts they in Liverpool had made during the last fifteen years for a more serious study and a happier enjoyment of the drama in that city. Recalling a lecture given by Mr. Granville Barker at the University College in Liverpool about fifteen years ago, he said at the back of the hall, behind all the fashionable people, was a crowd of young men in deadly earnest. They founded the Playgoers' Society in the city, which rapidly grew in membership and was now the Playhouse Circle. He was sure that but for the efforts of the Playhouse Circle, which represented all the enthusiasts and critics of the theatre, Liverpool would not have its Repertory Theatre to-day, and he believed that but for the Circle they might not be keeping the theatre open to-day. He now agreed with what Mr. Granville Barker said at that lecture years ago, that they could not hope that their Repertory Theatre would fill the whole bill until experimental societies and theatres had done very necessary and advanced work. He was glad to tell the League that these activities were growing in Liverpool, and they were bound to produce a new audience, which would gradually help their theatre to, in time, fill the bill which they all hoped to see it do. Prof. Reilly added that they were very grateful to their patrons, mentioning Col. Shute in particular, and also to the Treasurer of the Drama League. It was very gratifying to see that Mr. Alec Rea was working amongst them. For many years he had been a director of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, and spent time and money and everything he could give in its service. Mr. Rea had taken to his Readean ventures in London all the enthusiasm he gave to the Repertory Theatre. Now he was immersed in the commercial theatre he was obviously limited, but he had done enormous things in London. He (the chairman) regarded Miss Lena Ashwell, who would speak on the English Drama, as a sort of prophet going about England holding the torch over the work in which they were all interested. Mr. Granville-Barker in these matters was their spiritual parent. Mr. Lennox Robinson, who in another country had done things which made them in England feel small, would speak on the drama in Ireland.

Miss Lena Ashwell, who had a very warm reception, referring to the chairman's description of her as a prophet, recalled that in a leading article in a newspaper she had been dubbed a Jeremiah. (Laughter.) It was supposed to be an insult, but

she never felt sure that it was, for Jeremiah was a very remarkable poet and he certainly was a very remarkable prophet. His prophecy was not altogether agreeable to the people of the day, but he happened to be right, and she wished the nation would realize that what the Drama League were trying to do in putting the claims for the drama before the people was really a righteous cause. They must reiterate the facts about the condition of the theatre in this country compared with other countries until they sank into the minds of the people. In the rest of Europe there were municipal theatres in every city, and these built up the basis of the national theatres in those countries. These buildings were dedicated to the arts and uses of the theatre and could never be deviated from that purpose. When the Germans occupied Lille they opened a new theatre, which was built by the citizens as an asset to the general well-being of the town. But in England we had not a building set apart for either music or drama, though we had the greatest drama in literature of any country in the world since the days of the Greeks. It was the literature of the theatre written by English-speaking people, and yet the only places where our people were granted its privileges were the schools and the universities. The great dramas of Shakespeare were written to be played, and not only to be studied in the library. In these days, when actors were always being told that they were useless, they should remember that Shakespeare was an actor. Nobody had ever written in a great way for the theatre unless they had been definitely connected with the theatre and the life of the theatre, so as to understand the medium through which they were working.

With the Puritan movement, she continued, there was a break in the tradition of the theatre in England. The influence of that movement had come down through the centuries in the belief of the English people that anything which was amusing and which made one forget oneself was necessarily wrong. And then the hand of Calvin was laid on the drama. Let them consider the loss that was sustained by the theatre through that break in tradition caused by the Puritan movement. Nowadays the recreation of the English people was founded on a purely commercial basis. That meant there was no possibility of experiment or development of that great art, and so they found that gradually in this country the theatre was dying. That was why her critics called her a Jeremiah—because she said that. Throughout the length and breadth of this country there were many towns where there was no theatre, and therefore the youth of the country was deprived of hearing and seeing the great dramas. "We have no substitute for the cinema," declared the speaker, "but I will not get on that subject." (Laughter.) Over and over again in this country people who had cared for the best in the theatre had bravely endeavoured in places to keep it going, but later the buildings had been swept out into this new use. She mentioned Miss Horniman's great effort in Manchester, and reminded the audience that it was Miss Horniman who gave them Sybil Thorndike and a number of very admirable and useful artists who had been of

great worth to this country. She loved the theatre, and it was now a cinema. Then there was Miss Baylis, at the Old Vic. (Applause.) During the war it was the only place in the greatest city of the greatest Empire the world had ever known where our people from the Colonies could see the dramas of Shakespeare. "The people who hold the Empire together," said Miss Ashwell, "are people like Shakespeare—it is not commercialism, not industrialism, not interest, but the power of our language and the power of that wonderful poetry which we find in Shakespeare and a number of people who are *living to-day*." Over and over again there had been these efforts in our country to keep the flag flying in regard to our great literature, and over and over again because of lack of support in the auditorium these efforts had simply been water and sand.

She urged that amateur actors who were experimenting on the right lines should be encouraged, but reminded them that they could only learn to act properly from seeing professional people play, because it was their life. There should be an interchange all the time between the professional actor and the amateur actor, so that they could help each other to benefit the whole nation. What we badly needed in this country was a national theatre. The reason for much of the unhappiness and discontent in this country to-day was that we had gone astray in our idea of what was necessary to man. We in England were apt to say, "Let's get on with industry, with work," and the heart was left without any satisfaction. She thought there was no hope until we realized there was a hunger in the human soul for things which could raise us above sordidness of industrial life.

Mr. Lennox Robinson, in a humorous speech, complained of another injustice to Ireland in that he had been allowed ten minutes to speak of the position of drama in the Irish Free State, whereas two hours would not be sufficient. In spite of eight years of war he could say, "We are doing very nicely," and the Abbey Theatre had survived. Its company to-day, he thought, was as good as ever it was, and within the last two years they had discovered three dramatists, one a dramatist of genius. "I do think," he said, "that the English people have got at the present time better drama than they deserve. We have only just built up our theatre in Ireland, and it must seem, compared to your riches of centuries, rather a thin and poor thing, but such as it is it has been built up by the passionate enthusiasm of a few people who have given years and years of their lives to the work. It is only in that way that you will get drama for the theatre, not that is worthy of you but that is worthy of the great heritage of drama which is yours. In my country, where everyone has a feeling for play-acting, there is no need of Drama Leagues. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. Granville-Barker, announcing that he had "to talk business" to the audience, said he thought the League was "getting on." It had a long way to go yet, but looking back over its brief history, he thought it had made as few mistakes as a body of that sort could expect to make, and

on the whole that it had been travelling in the right direction. For that they owed thanks for the help given them from many quarters in time, money and good advice. They had, he thought Liverpool would agree, exercised sound business judgment in attracting to their cause as treasurer Mr. Alec Rea, and the League owed much to Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth. He was, unfortunately, not well enough to attend that evening, as he had met with a motor accident in France a few weeks ago. The initiated did know, and the uninitiated should know what the League owed to Mr. Whitworth in its daily round and task, and to his lieutenant, Miss Briggs. The record of the year's work was, he thought, satisfactory. The League organized the theatrical section of the Empire Exhibition, and they also had the architectural competition for designs for a national theatre, which Prof. Reilly was good enough to judge. When he asked the prize-winning architect how much a national theatre based on his designs would cost he said he thought it could probably be done for a million pounds. He (the speaker) told him he should be sorry to see one penny less spent on it. "I do not think it will be built to-morrow," said Mr. Granville-Barker, "but frankly I do believe it will be built one day, possibly sooner than we think, and I am very glad that there should be a fine and practical design for a theatre which can be turned to when the occasion arises." With the help of the Carnegie Trustees they had considerably enlarged their library and put it in very good working order, and he believed they could organize a series of book boxes that could go round to their affiliated societies. They hoped to have a suitable, properly lighted reading-room where students, not only from this country but from all over the Empire, and visitors from America could go and critically and aesthetically study the drama. They hoped that all the affiliated societies would make more use of the League facilities. The League was not paying its way, he would remind their supporters. A membership of 962 looked not unsatisfactory on the face of it, but he wished it was 9,962, and he saw no reason why it should not be. Of that number only 401 were affiliated societies and the rest were individual members who paid their guinea, and who, quite frankly, received and expected nothing in return. If by next year the League could have a thousand affiliated societies he should have no more fear that their work would go on and prosper. It was upon the existence of these many societies that certainly his personal hopes of the future of the theatre in England were based.

Mr. Granville-Barker, proceeding, said he seemed to have known four-and-twenty leaders of dramatic revival. He certainly had seen three or four renaissances of the theatre, and they had all been, up to now, of what he called a rather sectional sort. When they ceased the people had called them failures, but it was wrong so to speak because no good work could be said to fail. But he thought they had to admit that progress never took place in straight lines. The things they called failures were really gaps in progress. The latest renaissance differed in an important way from the others, it was very widespread, but it was not particularly



professional nor was it in the old sense amateur, but it showed them all over the country, from all classes and sorts of people, a most healthy interest, a thoroughly national interest, in the art of the drama. Those of them who were interested in the theatre seriously were still in a minority, and he supposed 100,000 would cover the number in this country. But they were an increasing minority, and an increasingly influential minority, and for the first time in his recollection they were seeing the creation of a sound public opinion in the matter. It was coming slowly, but it was coming—a sense of responsibility for drama which differed from the old tiresome relations of merely customer and shop-keeper. The creation of sound public opinion was the really important thing which the Drama League had, as a drama league, in hand and should consider.

As to the question of authors' fees, they had not been able to arrive at a very complete settlement, but it was the best they could get the majority of people to agree to, because they represented all the conflicting interests. Another question which was coming up to be discussed was, "What are and what are not public performances?" The law was vague on the point, and it might be that it was better to leave the law in that condition, but it could only be left in that condition if everybody tried to give equitable treatment in the matter. Nobody wanted to introduce legislation on the subject. It was troublesome and costly, and in the end it was not really very satisfactory. He appealed to everyone to see that equitable treatment was dealt out in the matter where the law did not provide very clearly one way or the other.

He believed the time was coming when the League, if it could gather a little more strength, might draw up a charter, and he suggested that when that document was drawn up it should contain not only demands but promises. The first article of the charter should undoubtedly be a demand for a national theatre. With the advocacy of a national theatre came the whole question of endowed theatres in the provinces. It seemed to him that one of the questions involved in the creation of endowed theatres in cities like Manchester, Glasgow and Dundee was that of modern geography. The time had passed when people lived close to the doors of a theatre. A great many supporters of the theatre who used to live quite close to the theatre fifty years ago were now living a good way off. That fact had made a great difference to the commercial theatre in those towns, and it was probably one of the causes which was at the root of the trouble of the endowed theatre. The endowed theatre would have to be connected with educational institutions, and its work would have to include a large number of purely educational performances, on the occasion of special festivals of drama, which people would necessarily devote a particular week to see. And what was to be their promise in the charter? It was the promise of a knowledge by all classes of society of our best drama, that drama which was second to none in the world, a knowledge of it as a living thing, and a quickening of the people's sensibilities, a sharpening of people's appre-

hensions and a stimulating of their judgment and knowledge of men and things. Another demand must be for a recognition in all our universities of the study of drama as a living art and not merely as a thing which existed in annotated editions. In this connection he acknowledged the great public spirit of Col. Shute in getting Liverpool University to take the lead in establishing a readership in the art of the theatre. The League should promise the nation in its charter that through the medium of the theatre more grace and beauty might be given to the lives of the people in this prosaic age, and an effort made to have the language of Shakespeare spoken by the common people in a way Shakespeare himself would have been pleased to have heard, so that in future the English people might move well, look noble and show that civilization could produce something else besides material wealth. "We are a democracy," added the speaker, "and the salvation of democracy is good manners."

A vote of thanks to the speakers was accorded on the motion of Col. Shute, who said they in Liverpool could claim to have attempted something for dramatic art. The Playhouse Theatre was in its thirteenth year.

The Playhouse Circle was thanked for their hospitality and the arrangements for the Conference, on the motion of Mr. Alec Rea.

#### A NOTE ON THE LAW OF COPYRIGHT.

At the Liverpool Conference there existed some doubt as to the position of Copyright in this country, and the delegates desired a statement of the law to be published in *DRAMA*.

**THE ENGLISH COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1911 PROVIDES FOR THE EXISTENCE OF COPYRIGHT IN GREAT BRITAIN DURING THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND FOR 50 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH.**

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Prior to July 1, 1912 the old Act of 1842 was in force, and the protected period was then the author's life plus seven years—or forty-two years, whichever was the longer period. Where works exist under this copyright their period is extended as if under the new Act.

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Recitations by one person in public of "reasonable extracts" do not infringe copyright; the limit to one person is so as to exclude dramatic performance by two or more actors. Copyright includes the right of translation. Translations may be made if the author consents, or for purposes of study, review, etc., without infringing the copyright.

A dramatic work includes any piece for recitation or entertainment by dumb show the scenic arrangement or acting form of which is fixed in writing or otherwise.

NEVIL TRUMAN.

# NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

## SHEFFIELD PLAYGOERS.

The Sheffield Playgoers have sent us their Annual Report and a very attractive syllabus for the year 1924-1925. For the last twelve months the society has been responsible for two lectures, fourteen play readings and nine full productions, the latter including "Justice," "The Cradle Song," by Martinez Sierra, "The Pantomime Rehearsal," "The Duke's Decision," by Mr. McLaren (the winning one-act competition play) and "The Dover Road." Other productions included for the Leeds Art Theatre "King Lear's Wife" and "The Constant Lover." The membership of the society is now nominally 915.

For the next season there is an interesting series of lectures and the plays announced include the special production of "Back to Methusalem," which will be given on consecutive evenings and afternoons beginning on December 5 and ending on December 13. The Report adds that the admirable arrangement now entered upon with the Drama League, The Times Library and Societies affiliated to the Drama League, has enabled the Committee to hire sets of books for nearly all the readings. This has enabled all members to take part in the readings without incurring any personal expense in the way of buying copies of the play to be read: on the other hand, it has increased the cost of the play readings as a society undertaking.

## ASHBURTON GROUP.

The London C. H. A. Rambling Club, the headquarters of the Ashburton Group, has some interesting dramatic features on its new syllabus. On November 15 the Group will give performances of "Sister Beatrice" and of Mr. Leonard C. White's "The Greater Law." On December 1, a programme of Irish Plays, arranged by Miss Herring. On December 13, a performance of "Eager Heart," under the direction of Mr. J. B. Thorp. The secretary of the Drama Group is Miss Herring, who will be pleased to give particulars to anyone inquiring at the Ashburton Club, 28 Red Lion Square, W.C.

## POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

The Post Office Savings Bank Dramatic Society, whose president is A. Hemstock, Esq. (the Controller), is to produce at the Chiswick Town Hall, on November 27 and 28, 1924, "Nothing but the Truth," a comedy in three acts by James Montgomery, to be preceded by "Waiting for the Bus," a farce in one act by Gertrude Jennings.

Mr. Hasluck, the Society's producer, has been most valuable to the company, and has helped them in past years to produce with great success, "Brown Sugar," "Lady Windermere's Fan," and "Tilly of Bloomsbury." It is hoped that the forthcoming production will prove yet another success. Tickets can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, the prices being 3s. 6d. and 2s. 4d., reserved; 1s. 2d. unreserved.

## PROGRESSIVE PLAYERS.

"Up-Stream," by Clifford Bax was given at the Westfield Hall, Gateshead, on October 16 to 19, in the version published by the British Drama League. The audiences were enthusiastic, though not so large as might have been wished.

"Up-Stream" is a study of the primeval forest and of untamed nature, but it must be admitted that it is the primeval forest of the stage, conventional rather than real. For this very reason, in a way, the play is peculiarly suited to amateurs, because as they knew no theatrical tricks they do not emphasize its melodramatic aspect, but make it convincing by unstudied acting.

## BELFAST.

The Northern Drama League, which was founded last year to promote amateur performances of good plays unlikely to be seen in the theatres of the city, hopes to continue its work during the coming winter. For the winter's programme the Committee has under consideration the following plays: "The Rhesus," by Euripides (Gilbert Murray's translation); "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," by Beaumont and Fletcher. A modern comedy by one of the following authors: Granville-Barker, Stanley Houghton, Alan Monkhouse. A production of one-act plays to be chosen from the works of Eugene O'Neill, Rubinstein, Glover, Tchekov, Galsworthy. The League will include the following classes of members with voting powers: Patrons, £5 5s.; Audience Members—subscription, £1 1s. (entitled to two transferable tickets for each production); Active Members—subscription, any sum from 5s. to £1 1s., at the option of the subscriber (entitled to two transferable tickets in respect of each play in the production of which such member assists). An active member who subscribes £1 1s. will receive two tickets for every production.

## GLASGOW.

The new programme of the Scottish National Theatre Society promises to be interesting and progressive, including as it does three new productions with the possibility of a fourth, and a return visit to the "Commercial" Theatre—this time to the Glasgow Theatre Royal, and last but not least the engagement of a professional producer and coach in the person of Mr. Frank D. Clewlow, who comes to Glasgow with the highest credentials earned in a wide experience of stage work in the South. After careful consideration, the Council feels that the time has come when, without danger of prejudicing the national character of the movement, a beginning may be made to give effect to the secondary object of the Society—"To encourage in Scotland a public taste for good drama of any type." The play chosen for the purpose is "The Two Shepherds" (in two acts) by the Spanish playwright, G. Martinez Sierra, and it is hoped to give this delightful picture of Spanish peasant life its first production in Scotland at the Athenaeum Theatre in December. The presentation of this play may be expected to be of service to young Scots dramatists as well as a valuable new experience for the Scottish national Players themselves.

# Laura Smithson

L.R.A.M., Elocution Double Diploma.  
Of the "Old Vic." Shakespeare Co., and  
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NOTE.—The Century Theatre is a few minutes' walk from Notting Hill Gate Station (Tube or Underground). Bus Routes :15 passes the door 27, 28, 31, 46, 52 pass Archer Street.

